

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 JUSE-00 CA-01 MCT-01 HA-05 TRSE-00

AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 ICAE-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00

SSO-00 /066 W

-----006216 172217Z /63

O R 172130Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6611

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

UNCLAS MANAGUA 2277

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, PINT, SHUM, NU

SUBJECT: NICARAGUA: TENSE AND UNCERTAIN

REF: MANAGUA 2068

BEGIN SUMMARY: SOME TENSION AND UNCERTAINTY CONTINUE TO PERVADE THE ATMOSPHERE OF NICARAGUA. MAJOR EVENTS SUCH AS THE SECOND CHAMORRO ASSASSINATION OBSCURE OTHER, LESS "NEWSY" HAPPENINGS. THREE SUCH HAPPENINGS ARE THE CONTINUING LAND INVASIONS IN CHANANDEGA, THE DENIAL OF ENTRY TO FIVE SPANISH PRIESTS AT PENAS BLANCAS, AND CONTINUING STUDENT ACTIVISM. END SUMMARY.

1. LAND INVASIONS HAVE OCCURRED PERIODICALLY IN NICARAGUA. THE MOST RECENT INVASIONS - WHICH CONTINUE AS OF THIS WRITING - ARE TAKING PLACE IN CHINANDEGA IN AN AREA WHICH HAS BEEN SUBJECT TO LAND INVASIONS FOR MANY YEARS. ON MAY 9 OVER 1,000 CAMPESINOS (ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS) OCCUPIED AN UNKNOWN AMOUNT OF LAND. TWICE SINCE THEN,
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THEY HAVE BEEN DISLODGED BY THE NATIONAL GUARD (GN).T HOWEVER, ON MAY 14, ABOUT 700 RETURNED AND ARE STILL THERE. THE CAMPESINOS APPEAR TO BE RECEIVING FOOD AND OTHER ASSISTANCE FROM VARIOUS SECTORS OF THE POPULATION OF CHINANDEGA. ADDITIONALLY, THERE ARE REPORTS THAT A GROUP OF STUDENTS HAS ATTEMPTED TO SUPPLY FOOD TO THE CAMPESINOS. LA PRENSA AND EL CENTROAMERICANO (LEON) BOTH REPORT THAT

THE GREATER PORTION OF THIS ASSISTANCE HAS BEEN INTERDICTED BY THE GN AND THAT MORE THAN 150 PRISONERS INCLUDING CHILDREN HAVE BEEN TAKEN INTO CUSTODY BY THE GN. THE MARXIST GENERAL WORKERS CONFEDERATION (CGT-I) IS REPORTEDLY PROVIDING ADVICE TO THE CAMPESINOS. IN THIS TENSE SITUATION, THE LANDOWNERS HAVE REQUESTED GON INTERVENTION, AND, BASED ON PAST EXPERIENCE, ARE LIKELY TO CONTINUE TO RECEIVE IT. THE GON POSITION IS THAT THESE FARMERS SHOULD ACCEPT A LONG-STANDING OFFER OF LAND IN NEW COLONIES IN EASTERN NICARAGUA.

2. ON MAY 13, FIVE DOMINICAN PRIESTS OF SPANISH NATIONALITY WERE DENIED ENTRY TO NICARAGUA AT THE COSTA RICAN BORDER (PENAS BLANCAS). THE FIVE HAD BEEN ATTENDING A CONVOCATION OF THE ORDER IN COSTA RICA. ALL HAD BEEN WORKING FOR SOME YEARS HERE. PRESS REPORTS DIFFER ON THE REASONS FOR THE DENIAL. NOVEDADES (MAY 16) THE PRO-SOMOZA PAPER, SAYS THAT ENTRY WAS DENIED FOR "DOCUMENTARY" REASONS, BUT THAT ON MAY 15, THESE PROBLEMS WERE RESOLVED AND THE PRIESTS WERE ADMITTED. THE OPPOSITION LA PRENSA, OF THE SAME DAY, SAYS THAT BEFORE THE DOMINICANS WERE PERMITTED ENTRY, THE ARCHBISHOP OF MANAGUA PROTESTED TO THE PAPAL NUNCIATURA WHICH PROTESTED TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WHICH "ORDERED" THEIR IMMEDIATE ADMISSION. (NOTE: AN EMBASSY OFFICER WHO SPOKE TO THE ACTING NUNCIO ON MAY 16, LEARNED THAT THE FIVE PRIESTS WERE TURNED BACK AT PENAS BLANCAS BECAUSE THEIR VISAS WERE NOT IN ORDER. THE PRIESTS RETURNED TO UNCLASSIFIED

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SAN JOSE AND CONTACTED THE NUNCIO THERE WHO CALLED THE ACTING NUNCIO AND ASKED HIM TO INTERVENE IN THE MATTER. THE ACTING NUNCIO CONTACTED VICE MINISTER BODAN WHO ISSUED AN IMMEDIATE ORDER FOR THEIR ADMISSION. THE ACTING NUNCIO WAS SOMEWHAT ANNOYED OVER THE MATTER BECAUSE OF THE WAY THE MEDIA HANDLED THE SITUATION, AND BECAUSE HE FELT THE DOMINICANS SHOULD HAVE NOT ATTEMPTED TO ENTER NICARAGUA WITHOUT PROPER VISAS. END NOTE.) ACCORDING TO LA PRENSA, STUDENTS AND OTHERS HAD THREATENED TO CLOSE DOWN ACTIVITIES AND SEEK "SOLIDARITY WITH ALL SECTORS," IF THE PRIESTS CONTINUED TO BE EXCLUDED.

3. STUDENT ACTIVISM CONTINUE TO BE AN UNSETTLING INFLUENCE. RECENTLY, A WIDESPREAD STUDENT STRIKE WAS TEMPORARILY SETTLED WHEN A LIST OF DEMANDS WAS PRESENTED TO PRESIDENT SOMOZA AND A TWO-WEEK PERIOD FOR PROTESTERS TO STUDY THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DEMANDS BY THE GON WAS ANNOUNCED (REFTEL). SINCE THEN, VIRTUALLY ALL THE DEMANDS HAVE BEEN ACCEDDED TO BY SOMOZA, BUT ON MAY 16, STUDENT AGITATION BEGAN AGAIN, BUT TO A MUCH LESSER DEGREE THAN EARLIER. AROUND THE COUNTRY, NEW STUDENT STRIKES OF 24 TO 48 HOURS HAVE BEEN DECLARED. IN SOME PARTS OF THE COUNTRY, THE

STRIKERS HAVE ALSO CLOSED THEATERS AND TAKEN OVER CHURCHES
IN ADDITION TO SCHOOLS. IN ADDITION
TO CITING LACK OF
GON COMPLIANCE WITH THE OLD DEMANDS (I.E. BETTER DETENTION
CONDITIONS FOR FSLN PRISONERS), NEW DEMANDS ARE BEING
MADE INCLUDING: THAT THE PARENTS' GROUP NOT MEET WITH
SOMOZA AS BEFORE, RELEASE OF ALL TUDENTS CURRENTLY HELD,
FREEDOM OF STUDENT ORGANIZATION, AND AN END TO REPRESSION
OF STUDENT ACTIVISTS. LA PRENSA REPORTS THAT SOME CON-
FRONTATIONS HAVE OCCURRED WITH THE GN. THE MINISTRY OF
EDUCATION HAS STATED IN A COMMUNIQUE PROMINENTLY CARRIED
IN BOTH MAJOR NEWSPAPERS THAT, SINCE STUDENTS WERE NOW
MAKING NON-EDUCATIONAL, POLITICAL DEMANDS - ACTION WHICH
IS PROHIBITED BY REGULATIONS - THOSE STUDENTS WHO EXCEED
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THE PERMITTED NUMBER OF ABCENCES AND DO NOT OBSERVE
CONDUCT "APPROPRIATE TO THEIR STATUS" WILL BE SANCTIONED
WITH THE "FULL SEVERITY" OF GOVERNING REGULATIONS.

4. COMMENT: THE POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE REMAINS SOMEWHAT
TENSE, AND UNCERTAINTY REGARDING THE FUTURE CONTINUES.
MAJOR EVENTS, SUCH AS THE SECOND CHAMORRO ASSASSINATION,
HAVE BEEN FEW AND INFREQUENT, BUT A HOST OF LESSER
HAPPENINGS OCCUR DAILY. THE ABOVE INCIDENTS SERVE TO
ILLUSTRATE THE COURSE OF CURRENT EVENTS. EACH OTHERWISE
MINOR INCIDENT CARRIES THE POTENTIAL OF ESCALATION.
END COMMENT.
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